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ABSTRACT

This practicum project investigated the management of substitute staff at a workplace day care center in Ontario, Canada. Although the center was a locally noted "model" facility, an increase in the use of substitute staff raised concerns about consistency and quality of care. A 10-week management plan was implemented which involved: (1) distribution of orientation, general, and security information packages to substitute staff; (2) instructional interactions between substitutes and the center's director and permanent staff; and (3) evaluation of and feedback on substitutes' performance. The first objective of the implementation, for substitute staff to achieve a full knowledge of the center's philosophy, had conflicting results, indicating that more feedback is necessary to ensure application of the philosophy in daily activities. Another objective, elimination of security lapses, was successful. Negative program delivery impacts from use of substitute staff was also reduced, but not to the extent desired over the implementation period. Explanations for this finding include lack of time and subsequent low number of experiences for each substitute teacher. (Contains 16 references.) (EV)

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ESTABLISHING A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SUBSTITUTE STAFF IN A WORK PLACE CHILD CARE SETTING

by

Jane Lucas

Cohort 71

A Practicum Report Presented to the
Master's Programs in Life Span Care and Administration
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

1996

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Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Sept 20/1996 — Date

M Lucas — Signature of Student

Abstract

Establishing a management plan for substitute staff in a workplace child care center. Lucas, M. Jane, 1996. Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Master's Program in Life Span Care and Administration.

Descriptors: Administrator Role/Responsibility Child Caregivers Day Care Centers/Philosophy/Security Early Childhood Education Program Administration/Continuity Resource/Substitute/Temporary Staff Staff Absenteeism Staff Management Strategies Staff Training/Education Teacher Role/ Responsibility.

At a workplace day care center, the use of substitute staff had been increasing. With this higher utilization, negative impacts on the center's program conflicted with its primary philosophical goal: delivery of a quality program.

The author designed and implemented, as a consult, a strategy to improve the performance of substitute staff. Information packages covering orientation topics, general aspects of employment and site security at the center were developed. Both the Director and permanent staff were given roles in initial substitute staff training and in a subsequent substitute performance evaluation process.

The performance of substitute teachers improved over the course of a 10

week implementation period. Improvement has been attributed to the initial knowledge gained by new substitutes when provided with the information packages and the accumulation of knowledge gained through evaluations of their experiences. The strategy has been adopted by the center's Director with some minor modifications to the methods of delivering information and the evaluation process. Subsequent improvement in substitute staff performance at the subject site is anticipated based on the cumulative effects of further experience.

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Chapter I - Introduction and Background

The Setting in Which the Problem Occurs

Location and general description

There are many types of child care facilities in Ontario, Canada, including drop-in centers, co-operatives, Christian, work place, native and English as a second language (ESL). Each is based on its own, unique philosophy, making a wide range of language, culture and parental involvement options available.

The setting of this practicum is a workplace day care center. The center serves the employees as a family convenience but is not financially incorporated into it. Being a nonprofit center, it is controlled by a volunteer board of directors. The workplace maintains its involvement through representation on the Board. To operate at maximum efficiency, full capacity is maintained by making vacant child care spaces available to the community (population in excess of 300,000) on a first come, first serve basis. Operating costs are recovered from fees and various government grants.

Control authorities

The legislative environment in which the setting is situated involves two levels of government: provincial and municipal. The provincial Day Nurseries Act (1988) sets standards for all aspects of day care operations. It includes a

requirement for licensing, inspection and enforcement. Local authorities can provide additional health (food preparation) and safety (fire protection) conditions through bylaws or locally administered legislation.

Although this center was established as a nonprofit organization seven years ago, not all in Ontario at that time were. Government subsidies were available to only nonprofit operations. Since 1992, child care centers in Ontario have been encouraged by the Provincial Government to convert from for-profit centers to nonprofit centers. The purpose of this effort was to maximize the financial benefits it provided in favor of the children. The government of the day accomplished this by providing teacher salary enhancement subsidies to nonprofit centers. This made running a for-profit center financially inviable. Grants and assistance were made available to for-profit centers to assist with their conversion to nonprofit.

With the conversion process completed, government financial assistance is now made available for start up costs, Staff Wage Enhancements (WAG) and Direct Operating Grants (DOG).

Another aspect of the setting for this practicum that should be presented at this time is maternity leave. The relationship of this topic to the practicum will become clear in Chapter II of this report: The Problem. The Federal Employment

Standards Act provides for pregnancy and parental leaves for both part time and full time employees. Women can obtain up to 17 weeks of unpaid leave prior to giving birth. Both parents are allowed up to 18 weeks of parental leave to be taken by either one or divided between them. For both types of leave, parents receive income from the Unemployment Insurance Commission (Butterworths Canada, 1984).

Physical setting.

The center is located in a chronic care/geriatric hospital that was built 10 years ago and, as such, represents modern facility construction. The center was conceived, designed and built as an integral part of the hospital; it is not housed in space that was converted for day care usage.

The physical layout of the center includes a central hallway with adjacent rooms. At one end is a room for toddlers; at the other end is a room for infants. Between these, on one side, is a large room for the preschoolers. Office space, kitchen, storage and staff rooms are on the opposite side of the hallway.

The center is situated in the lower level of the hospital. It does not have a basement appearance or atmosphere because each classroom for the children has large floor to ceiling windows. There is direct access to secured play yards, with each group of children able to access their own outside space from their

classrooms.

This center has yearly performance evaluations for each staff member. The annual operating budget is $433,342, including a $4,500 item for substitute staff (Subject Day Care Center Budget, 1996).

Management and philosophy of the center.

The operation is also modern from an organizational perspective. Coming under the umbrella of a hospital administration provides this center with access to comprehensive management approaches not characteristic of other small, local facilities which operate independently.

The adopted philosophy for the center is :"Our Centre is primarily interested in offering a program planned so that children may experience creative active play, experimentation with various materials, achievement, companionship and self-discipline. Through play experiences and the guidance of staff, trained in Early Childhood Education, we offer children:

1) an opportunity to develop a healthy body through safe supervised play;

2) an opportunity to expand the imagination through dramatic play in the doll centre, play with cars, blocks, puppets etc.;

3) a great variety of materials and plenty of time to experiment with them;

4) an environment in which the child can grow in independence and feelings of

achievement,

5) experimentation with music, science, access to good books and other stimulations such as thinking games,

6) a great variety of special visitors, field trips and special days,

7) opportunities to learn cooperation, sharing and taking turns, and

8) opportunities to make friends with adults and children." (Parent Handbook, 1995)

Human resources

The center is staffed with 12 teachers, a cook and a part-time bookkeeper, all under the direct supervision of a full-time Director. The board is comprised of hospital representatives, the day care Director, parents of the children, a staff representative and a member of the community.

Staff qualification standards are high. Ten of the twelve teachers have Early Childhood Education (E.C.E.) diplomas. In Ontario, this is a two-year college course (not a university degree program). The remaining two staff do not have diplomas but have three-year university degrees in general arts. This qualifies them as assistants to the teachers. The day care center has recently implemented a new hiring policy that does not allow for anyone to be hired who does not have E.C.E. qualifications.

The day care licensing body in Ontario is the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Licensed centers must ensure that each group of children has a person who holds "a diploma in early childhood education from an Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology" (Day Nurseries Act, Ontario Regulation 760/83, s. 59, p. 52). A day care center may not operate without a license.

Operating characteristics.

The subject day care center operates Monday to Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. It is closed for national holidays: January 1 (New Years Day), Good Friday, Easter Monday, May 24 (Victoria Day), July 1 (Canada Day), Civic Holiday (August 1), September 1 (Labor Day), Thanksgiving (second Sunday in October), December 25 (Christmas Day) and December 26 (Boxing Day). These 10 days are paid holidays for full-time staff.

The day care center is operating at capacity with 52 licensed spaces: 10 children under 18 months old; 10 children from 18 to 30 months old; and 32 children from 30 months to 5 years of age. The license allows for up to four developmentally handicapped children from 2 to 5 years of age. The legislated staff to child ratios in Ontario for infants are 3:10, toddlers are 1:5 and preschoolers are 1:8 (Day Nurseries Act, 1988).

The Student's Role in the Setting

The author is a professional colleague of the Director and staff in the subject center. Since the opening of this day care center, the author has developed a professional relationship with the Director and has been invited to solve a long standing problem in this work place in the role of a consultant. This relationship has evolved from teaching Early Childhood Education courses part-time at the local college. These courses were attended by several of the Early Childhood Educators from the subject center who returned to school to upgrade their credentials. The author's own work place di not allow an environment of sufficient duration to implement a practicum problem solving project.

The Director was open to change and had been given approval of the board of directors to implement any recommendations made as a result of this problem solving practicum.

A personal familiarity with the Director and staff, mutual professional respect, a desire and the authority to make changes provided the necessary framework for successful problem solving in this practicum.

Chapter II - The Problem

Problem Statement

The subject day care center is a locally noted "model" facility. It has an experienced Director, effective staff, adequate funding and many other key ingredients for a successful operation. Management strategies are in place for major operating items, such as budget, permanent staff and the facility. These produce the high quality standards for child care that this center is known for. It is the attention to the finer aspects of the operation that would lead this institution to excellence.

The problem in the work place child care center was the management of substitute staff. From a financial perspective, this class of employee only represents 1% of the total operating budget for this center. However, when parental leaves are considered, substitute staff at this center had accounted for up to 30% of the staff complement. The use of substitute staff for short term replacement needs had been found to have increased by 23% over the last four years.

The impact of substitute staff on the operation had varied from minor to significant. In cases of significant impact, it is not necessarily the magnitude of the problems that develop with substitute staff that was of concern, but the web of negative impact across the operation. The Director was concerned that substitute

staff did not understand the administrative side of their employment. Security of the center and payroll problems were examples of this. Permanent staff were concerned with the effectiveness of substitute staff, including their inability to carry a full workload. All issues either affected the safety and/or care of the children. Inconsistency of care was reported by the Director to have produced confusion, anxiety and other negative effects.

Substitute staff should have an understanding of what to expect from the child care center and what is expected of them. They should not be the source of administrative disruptions or permanent staff disappointment. The work of substitute staff can produce a minimum disruption to programs, schedules and daily routines if the results of their presence matches as closely as possible the performance of permanent staff. The practicum problem in this project was identified as the lack of a management strategy and procedures for substitute staff to allow this performance level to be achieved.

Documentation of the Problem

Introduction

Documentation of the problem was through a number of methods, each with a specific purpose. These are introduced below and summarized separately in

subsequent sections of this chapter.

Although the author was familiar with the nature of the problem at the subject day care center, it was prudent to investigate common elements with the experience of others. Bibliographic research confirmed the presence of the problem and identified the magnitude of it in child care and related service industries across North America. The research for this project covered day care and teaching environments to provide a focus on the problem in the education industry.

Detailed documentation of the problem at the subject day care center was needed to sort out actual difficulties from symptoms and fact from emotion. A set of surveys and interviews was undertaken to gather data from the Director and staff involved. The emphasis of this effort was on those who could influence the existing conditions by changes they will have to make. In this way, these critical stakeholders became active members of the problem solution team at an early stage in the process through consultation.

The recorded financial and staff impacts of the problem were investigated by reviewing day care records and budgets. With this information, the financial aspects of problem and its resolution strategy were considered.

The final source of problem documentation was other local day care centers. Three were selected which provided different environments in which to

document the practicum problem and assess the impact of setting variations.

General aspects

The problem of managing substitute staff had been identified in this case as a minor obstacle which impedes a very good day care operation from achieving excellence. The general aspects of managing staff are well documented, including published works for child care center directors (Hildebrand, 1993 and Eiselen, 1992). Why then, does this seemingly minor variation on this broad topic persist? The writer anticipated that the answer lay within the unique nature of the child care industry and the variables that complicate the problem.

The child care industry is unlike most others in that staff usage is controlled by legislation. This is evident from two simple examples: (1) An employee in a local factory who is absent due to illness is replaced by another permanent employee working a double shift; (2) At a large insurance company, a sick employee is not replaced; the work will wait until he/she returns. These scenarios are not generally applicable to the child care setting. Specific numbers of staff are mandated (Ontario Regulation 760/83 as amended to O. Reg. 143/88) and shift work is not the norm. Substitute staff are needed and often contacted on short notice. In this way, an unavoidable situation is presented to the day care industry.

Experience of others.

By definition, using a substitute teacher means "replacing a teacher with one of equal value - an understudy" state Purvis and Garvey (1993, p. 370). This would appear to represent the optimal performance level that could be achieved. Yet the literature suggests this to be far from the actual experience of others. How the problems associated with substitute staff manifest themselves is clearly a matter of perspective.

The Early Childhood Directors Association (Toys'n Things Press, 1983) provides the perspective of the director: "The staff would call in sick, which meant the director had to find substitutes and make all the arrangements in the wee hours of the morning or rush to the center herself or himself , feeling resentful" (p. 20)

From the permanent staff viewpoint, teachers "prefer to have their roles played by competent understudies" (Purvis and Garvey, 1993, p. 370). However, substitute teachers do not always see themselves engaged in this role. Neugebauer (1991) states, "substitutes often feel neglected, even exploited" (p. 19), in describing the problem from the substitute teacher's perspective. This opinion held by substitute staff is further documented by Bellm and Whitebook (1987) as including:

- "a sense of invisibility
- a sense of not belonging to the center
- low respect
- lack of recognition
- feeling unwelcome
- being asked to clean too much
- feeling excluded from chats as well as professional discussions

And of course: low pay". (p. 17)

Bellm and Whitebook (1987) consider the negative impact of substitute staff on parents and children as: (a)"The cumulative and disorienting effect on children and parents", and (b) "The drain of energy and resources which care givers could so much better devote to children - and to each other" (p. 3).

These authors also suggest that the financial side of the problem is masked and that there are "enormous hidden costs for substitute care which are not calculated in creating a sub budget" (p. 3). Administrative time spent finding and retaining substitute staff, directors providing the service and overtime pay for permanent staff when substitutes cannot be found are examples given.

Two other common themes are evident in the literature: a lack of qualified

substitute staff and low pay. Bellm and Whitebook (1986) report as follows: "Child care programs throughout the country report that their problems in finding reliable substitutes are increasing. In many areas the lack of substitutes is the most visible sign of a larger problem: a steadily worsening shortage of trained teachers" (p. 16).

Purvis and Garvey (1993) blame this lack of staff on the declining birth rate, the problem is growing (p. 370). This condition can only be aggravated by low pay.

The ability of substitute staff to provide adequate performance is not challenged in the literature. The competence of substitute staff is found to be limited by the expectations made of them, not their personal qualifications (Purvis and Garvey, 1993, p. 370). The most specific documentation of the problem identified by the writer also comes from Purvis and Garvey (1993). In a school environment, the "problem of inadequate substitute teacher programs" is described as "pervasive" (p. 370). This provides a measure of the problem in day care centers based on their similar daily operations with respect to staffing.

Site specific problem and causes.

Although the problem solutions in each case presented in the literature are unique to its particular environment, general and/or specific components were

found to apply to this practicum. Knowing when such solutions apply would be the result of a comparative analysis of the practicum environment to those presented in the literature. A clear understanding of the practicum environment was, therefore, necessary and was derived from a program of data acquisition involving staff and Director surveys / interviews. This process allowed goals, objectives and solutions to be focused on the specific practicum problem, thereby eliminating wasteful effort.

Staff survey.

Staff at the subject workplace day care were in an interesting position in relation to the practicum problem. They were both a source of the problem (absenteeism, sickness, maternity leaves, vacation, etc.) and one of the receivers of negative impacts. The focus of the data acquisition program for this group was not on them as a source of the problem because some of the reasons staff are not available for work, such as maternity leaves and vacation, can not be minimized. Other reasons for staff not being at work were better analyzed through records research and discussions with the Director.

The survey of staff, therefore, was directed towards determining the type and magnitude of impacts that the use of substitute staff had on permanent staff effectiveness, programs and the children. The survey provided staff with questions

on these topics and a selection of answers to respond with (see Appendix A). This format was easy to summarize with analytical averages representing a general position of the group surveyed. Results from this process (see Appendix B) paint a picture of the problem as seen through the eyes of permanent staff. The response from the Director was separated from that of staff in order to compare the administration perspective of the problem to that of staff. To gauge the significance of both responses, the optimum response is included in the summary of results.

Survey results

In all but one question, staff were more critical in their response than the Director. The difference in their opinions probably lies in the level of contact they had with substitute staff. With permanent staff being in constant support of substitute staff, their opinions could be based on more than just significant, infrequent events which may come to the attention of the Director. They could include smaller events which may have a cumulative effect on the quality of service provided.

The Director had consistently found performance and effectiveness of substitute staff nearer to optimum than staff. An individual interview to explore this opinion provided confirmation (subject day care center Director, personal

communication, February 13, 1996). It also revealed other, more significant concerns that the Director had from an administrative perspective not examined with the survey. The two most important of these were payroll and security of the center.

Through specific events, the Director was able to quantify additional administrative effort in preparing and making wage payments, particularly for short duration substitute staff. Parking and security passes are important to this particular workplace day care center because it is situated in a hospital. The Director had experienced incidents of misuse and tardy return of these after substitute staff had left the day care center.

A knowledge of routines and quality of work by substitute staff represented the greatest disparity between staff opinion and optimum performance. These are related topics, indicating staff dissatisfaction with substitute staff performance. A lack of knowledge of routines is surely a factor in the quality of work that substitute staff could provide.

An important difference between staff opinion and optimum performance also existed in the topics of expected workload, child reminders, permanent staff workload increasing when working directly with substitute staff and quantity of work. This group of results clearly showed permanent staff expectations for

workload were not high and that, in their opinion, these low expectations were being met. The inclusion of child reminders in this group indicated initial impacts on the program.

Results from survey questions on philosophy, adjustment to programs, subsequent performance and substitute staff selection input exhibited a notable difference between staff opinion and optimum performance. The inclusion of philosophy and program adjustment in this group indicate that staff were aware of these deficiencies. The impact that these had on the quantity and quality of work by substitute staff had already been established. A detailed review of subsequent performance by substitute staff was undertaken to understand the benefits of having a pool of substitute staff experienced with the operations of the center. Although the average response indicated this factor to be noteworthy, the distribution of responses provided additional information: 25% - very much, 25% - a fair amount, 50% - some and 0% - not at all. The individual experiences of permanent staff were varied on this topic. However, half of those surveyed found the ability of substitute staff to improve with experience under the present conditions to be only marginal.

The least negative aspect to having substitute staff in the center was the impact they had on permanent staff workload when they were employed in other

parts of the center. Their performance under these conditions varied from optimum by only one. It therefore followed that the condition that produced the results found in all of the above analyses was substitute staff working directly with permanent staff. This was supported by the results, in which half of the permanent staff expressed a desire for significant input to selecting substitute staff.

Records research

Further research on the subject site was undertaken to finalize an understanding of the size of the problem. With the staff survey confirming that the problem existed, a measure of the frequency of its occurrence was needed to establish the full magnitude of the problem. Absenteeism records were reviewed and analyzed to determine the frequency, duration and cost of substitute staff usage.

Table 1 provides a summary of pertinent record information derived from the Director's employment files.

Table 1

Summary of Substitute Staff Records for the Period 1993 - 1996

Year	Short Term Replacements Due to Illness, Vacation, etc. (hours / year)	Long Term Replacements Due to Maternity Leaves (person-months / year)
1993	480	6
1994	480	14
1995	540	12
1996	590	16

It was evident that the use of substitute staff for both short and long term duration replacement was increasing. In the case of short term replacement, the increase was 23% over four years and 166% over the same period for long term replacement. These figures represented annual totals and therefore showed general trends in substitute staff usage. It is important to note that substitute staff had accounted for up to 30% of the day care center's teaching staff at one time due to

overlapping use of such staff.

The budget for short term substitute staff, as shown in Table 2, was approximately 1% of the entire operating budget for the center. The cost for long term substitute staff was part of the labor budget because permanent staff on maternity leave are not required to be maintained on payroll; their income was replaced by unemployment insurance as described in Chapter I.

Table 2

Summary of 1996 Operating Budget - Selected Items

Item	Amount
wages	$321,772
benefits	25,925
substitutes	4,500
all other items	81,145
Total Budget	$433,342

Other day care centers

The writer made arrangements to interview the directors of other local day care centers. Three were selected which provided different environments in which to document the practicum problem and assess the impact of setting variations. They included: (a) a Christian day care center to determine any differences in problem manifestation between the subject day care and one with a more focused philosophy; (b) a day care in a rural setting to consider the effects of remote location on the practicum problem; and (c) a nursery school at a community center to consider the effects of substitute staff on a program involving only older children (4 and 5-year-olds).

At the Christian center, substitute staff were obtained from the affiliated church community. Familiarity with the children was given as the reason for this approach. It would also appear to address the philosophical needs of the center. The director was satisfied with the results of this approach given that the children usually remain "happy" through the experience.

The day care center in a rural environment did not identify a problem with obtaining substitute staff or negative results when they were employed. Two sources of substitute staff used were friends and relatives in the local, rural community for short term needs and recruitment of unsuccessful permanent staff.

candidates for long term replacement (i.e., a substitute staff list).

The program offered at the nursery school was limited to the oldest children educated in the pre-school environment. This was not a factor in the director's strategy for retaining substitute staff. The adult community served by the center was a source of familiar parents and relatives to satisfy this need.

Analysis of the Problem

Factors contributing to the problem in this case could be identified when each stakeholder is considered.

The Director

The lack of a management strategy minimized the director's ability to deal with the different ways in which the substitute staff problem manifested itself. "The need for a comprehensive substitute teacher program" is the overriding factor identified by Purvis and Garvey (1993, p. 370). Although their considerations were made in the context of a school setting, this, as a factor, matches that found at the practicum problem site. In a day care environment, Bellm and Whitebook (1987) identify a different problem but a similar factor: "With substitute child care workers in such short supply, it is important for centers to develop a successful working relationship with available subs. Clarifying your center's policies and

procedures regarding substitutes is a useful starting place" (p. 16).

Duffy (1991) is concerned with the loss of other management functions on occasions when the director fills in for permanent staff. She concludes her paper with: "After all, we really want time to be directors, not the sub" (p. 26). A successful program requires the effort of the full organization. Transferring responsibilities with an ultimate loss of effort in some other part of the structure can only result in a impaired program.

All of the above cases recognize that a management strategy is critical to solving the problems that arise with the use of substitute staff on a consistent and successful basis. At the subject day care center, there was no direction given in the policies for substitute staff, except the fact that they would be hired when required (Staff Policies, subject day care center, 1995). Temporary staff as individuals were not considered to represent a permanent situation. This is a common condition in the industry. Even day care center management manuals do not provide direction on the topic (Hildebrand, 1993; Eiselen, 1992).

Permanent staff

Procedures for program modifications or supervision strategies for substitute staff were not in place for permanent staff. Purvis and Garvey (1993) recognize that the performance of substitute staff does not rest with a school

principal or day care center director alone. Management of the resource needs to be "coordinated among faculty and administrators" (p. 370). Further in their paper, these authors identify roles for permanent teachers to address this factor. "Ways in which teachers can assist substitutes" (p. 371) are important for consistency in the classroom since a "day of substitute teaching need not be equated with a setback in the intended academic program" (p. 372).

"It is up to you as a colleague or administrator to help the sub function optimally in an unfamiliar workplace" (Bellm and Whitebook, 1987, p. 18). This statement is a further example of the need for permanent staff to be involved with the training and supervision of substitute staff. At the subject day care center, job descriptions were silent on staff responsibilities for substitutes. The results of the staff survey showed their low opinion of substitute staff. It was apparent that one is, in part, a result of the other.

Substitute staff.

Limited knowledge affects the ability of substitute staff to perform well, making performance equal to permanent staff difficult. In both the literature and at the subject day care center the ability of substitute staff was not the primary issue (where staff qualifications are the subject of controlling legislation). The conditions under which they work control their performance. "No one works effectively in

small, isolated space. Without some sense of the big picture, all of us tend to lose our sense of direction --- we feel lonely, unsupported, forgotten" (Neugebauer, 1991, p. 19). The big picture in this case was the philosophy statement and an understanding of how it was to be applied.

More directly related to day care center functions, Bellm and Whitebook advise: "A sub cannot do his or her best work without proper instructions and guidelines" (1987, p. 18). This is a recognition of the potential of substitute staff to perform well when the conditions are understood. With fully qualified substitutes available at the practicum site, it seemed possible that their performance could approach that of permanent staff.

"A sub should not be expected to replace a teacher in knowledge and ability to perform without time to learn and observe" (Bellm and Whitebook, 1987, p. 21). At the practicum site, this learning period was a factor recognized by staff. Performance on subsequent visits by substitutes was observed by permanent staff to improve by varying amounts : 0% not at all; 50% some; 25% a fair amount; and 25% very much). The distribution of opinion generally indicated that the time required for improve performance of substitute staff was too long.

The children.

The impact of substitute staff performance on the children is a direct result

of program delivery. In the literature reviewed, program delivery performance standards are not expected to be maintained when substitute staff are employed. Therefore, the children are expected to be affected.

In a school setting, poor performance of substitute staff is "a result of the expectations and plans generated by school districts" (Purvis and Garvey, 1993, p. 370). It is apparent that in some instances, the management plan is to expect poor performance. With all impacts affecting program delivery, the status quo at the subject day care was not acceptable to the Director.

"The presence of a substitute teacher in a classroom leaves a possibility that classroom instruction and classroom control will not be the same as when the teacher is present" (Gallo, 1991, p. 4). Permanent staff at the practicum site would consider this an understatement based on their survey response. The adage "a failure to plan is a plan to fail" is a fair description of management responsibilities on the subject. Unfortunately, the lack of effort on the part of administrators results in program failure.

This expectation to fail the children is further evident in the literature: "Make sure that everyone else knows that the sub is a sub. Knowing this will enable parents and staff to adjust their expectations and respond supportively" (Neugebauer, 1991, p. 20). Unlike the author of these words, this writer neither

favored nor proposed to reduce expectations where program delivery and impact on the children were concerned. One objective in this practicum exercise was to strive for performance equality among all classes of care givers.

Summary

A key word that best describes the impact of factors found to affect the problem, is "inconsistency". The writer believed that the opposite to this, consistency, was a significant factor for the problem resolution to address. Consistent management principles for all types of staff would be needed to produce consistent care for the children. It is interesting to note that once a permanent teacher is removed from a classroom, all others (teachers, parents, directors and children) are personally affected, feeling resentful, neglected, exploited or disoriented. These feelings were documented earlier in this chapter.

Substitute staff do not fit into the typical employee mold from a management perspective. Variations in benefits, pay rates and work schedules may not allow a director to manage them within the same streamlined system used for permanent employees; a customization of management procedures is required.

At other local day care centers the problem was found to be not as critical. Substitute staff were known quantities in the three settings investigated and came from the centers' supporting communities. Security was also not a major issue at

the other centers because they were not workplace settings. The variation in settings clearly affected solution strategies, indicating a need to consider the unique nature of the environment to be effective.

Chapter III - Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives

Based on the preliminary research undertaken to date, it can be stated that the poor performance of substitute staff is a common problem in the industry. The literature also indicates that this is not a unique problem to day care centers. Related environments, such as school programs, have also experienced the same problem. The existence of the problem had been documented considering each of the involved parties: children, permanent staff, directors and the substitute staff themselves. However, goals and objectives directed towards resolving the problem could not be developed in terms of each of these stakeholders. Instead, the writer assumed that all staff and administrative problems had the potential to directly or indirectly affect the children - the one prime stakeholder.

The formation of goals and objectives were therefore directed by the subject day care center's philosophy statement, in particular the initial assertion: "Our Centre is primarily interested in offering a program planned so that children may experience creative active play, experimentation with various materials, achievement, companionship and self-discipline. Through play experience and the guidance of staff, trained in Early Childhood Education" (Parent's Handbook,

subject day care center, 1995, p. 1). This part of the center's philosophy statement suggested that the program offered was of the highest importance and it was to be delivered by highly qualified staff.

Further on in the philosophy statement it is identified that children are to be offered "an opportunity to develop a healthy body through safe supervised play" (p. 1). This related to the administrative aspects of the problem involving security passes. In this particular workplace setting, security was of a greater interest than in most other day care environments. This was because of special programs offered at the hospital, the patients involved and the intimate physical relationship between the hospital and day care center.

Using the center's philosophy statement to provide direction, the following goal could be stated. To improve delivery of the child care program and day care security through improved management of substitute staff.

The writer had considered a number of objectives to achieve this goal. However, only those that could be successfully implemented over a 10 week period were considered in this project.

1. Substitute staff understanding of the philosophy of the center will increase to 100% for those substitute staff involved within a 10 week implementation period, as measured by pre-test and post test knowledge.

2. Incidents of security lapses will be eliminated for those substitute staff involved within a 10 week implementation period, as measured by review of director's records.

3. Negative program delivery impacts will be reduced 50% after a 10 week implementation period, as measured by a re-survey of permanent staff.

Problem solution enhancements requiring a greater period of time were developed after implementation. This included such measures as reducing the frequency of problem occurrence (short term absenteeism such as illness) through incentives to permanent staff.

Chapter IV - Solution Strategy

Review of Existing Programs, Models and Approaches

Literature review

In a school setting, Purvis and Garvey (1993) recommend a comprehensive solution in "Components of an Effective Substitute Teacher Program". It is summarized in terms of roles for all involved: the principal, regular teacher, substitute and district superintendent.

Purvis and Garvey (1993) describe a program for managing substitute staff, starting with methods of advertising for recruits. Application and hiring guidelines are provided which are directly applicable to the objectives of this project. These are reproduced below:

- job description, specifying qualifications required and responsibilities
- application form and interview procedures
- salary schedule, preferably based on experience and qualifications
- substitute teacher contract
- procedure for substitute's remuneration
- a form to evaluate the substitute (Purvis and Garvey, 1993, p. 370).

Of particular interest to the writer was the comprehensive nature of the list and the early initiation of an evaluation process.

The authors continue their comprehensive approach by suggesting a "substitute teachers packet" (p. 371); a formal set of standard information. This constitutes the first step in an orientation program. Further orientation is combined with training seminars conducted by permanent staff teachers because they "are, after all, stakeholders in this endeavor and, therefore, are the best source of information regarding their expectations of substitutes" (p. 371). This type of involvement for permanent staff appeared to address the writer's desire to have substitute staff performance match that of permanent staff.

The role of teachers should not end with training sessions, according to these authors. A "buddy system" (p. 371) is suggested to initially develop a comfortable environment and later "to instill an attitude of cooperation and appreciation for substitutes" (p. 371).

Objectives of this project could be addressed with a serious consideration of many aspects of Purvis and Garvey's program, particularly the involvement of permanent staff, orientation information and evaluation. Modifications to suit the practicum site could include a simplification of the orientation and training programs to suit the size and nature of the subject organization.

Neugebauer (1991) provides a substitute's perspective and recommendations in a day care setting. These include an orientation packet, a list of tasks and activities that should not be assigned to a substitute, and tips on how to use a substitute as a resource for the day care center.

It was determined that the information packet should include a summary of expectations, basic rules, guidelines, responsibilities and directions to find the center. These topics appeared to address a concern of this writer with the complicated, yet comprehensive, orientation and training program recommended by Purvis and Garvey.

A number of tasks that a substitute should not be asked to do are identified by Neugebauer (1991). They are recommended by the author because they can create problems which would not be obvious unless staff make a point of thinking about the environment in which the substitute must work. This further supported the need for permanent staff involvement in the management of substitute staff to produce consistency in the care of children and the program. It is of interest to note that the list of activities given is derived not from the impact on the substitute but from the impact on the program. An example from this list is to not ask a substitute "to diaper a child who is wary of strangers until they have had a chance to know each other" (p. 21). This focus on program impacts matches that which

was inherent in the writer's objectives.

Substitute staff are a resource with valuable information on the center according to Neugebauer (1991). Such information can be obtained from an interview or questionnaire. With this approach, the author suggests the evaluation program be directed towards the program, not the substitute staff performance. Ignoring a substitute staff evaluation program would not allow a substitute to make substantial performance improvements when used again. This would limit their effectiveness or extend the period of time needed to approach the performance level of permanent staff.

Duffy (1991) summarizes a pilot project in which permanent staff were shared with other centers to replace the need for substitutes. Negative outcomes from the experience outweighed the positive; the project was terminated. The author describes the positive aspects as being a contract between all three parties, clear and documented expectations, a financial plan and substitute work schedule. Negative aspects involved conflicting philosophies, the substitute's "fit" (p. 25) in both environments, communicating the work schedule (which was set daily) and an undefined role for the substitute when not replacing permanent staff.

The author believes the model can work. Although it is a widely suggested approach (Shaw, 1994; Child Care Information Exchange, 1989; Love, 1985) the

setting and local environment for this practicum problem would amplify the negative results found by Duffy. The practicum problem location is served by a number of small day care centers with diverse philosophies. The possibility of successfully implementing a roaming substitute staff under these conditions and within the time limits of this practicum was thought to be remote.

The approach of Duffy is directed toward recruitment as the primary method of solving the management of substitute staff problem. The practicum site did not experience a problem with finding qualified staff. Performance improvement was the goal.

The Child Care Information Exchange (1989) offers the experiences of five directors with substitute retention. They are all success stories in their own settings and meet local needs.

1. In a center with 450 children, parents are recruited and trained. Monthly guaranteed hours and pay, whether worked or not, are provided as well as free day care on days worked.

2. Another director uses "parents, acquaintances and people in the community " (p. 45). They are only used for scheduled short term needs (such as vacation) and are provided with policies, procedures, guidelines and rules (do's and don'ts).

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3. Technical schools, high schools and retirees are sources of substitute staff. It is a necessary step before being considered for permanent employment.

4. In a preschool, "two additional floating aides and a floating teacher" (p. 45) among five classes are used. This is supplemented with part time staff working more hours.

5. A list of qualified and partially qualified candidates for permanent positions is maintained.

The workplace environment of the practicum location, operation size and standards for staff qualifications limits the applicability of most of these. The examples provided demonstrate the importance of each individual environment on the method of retaining substitute staff. By extrapolation, the specific setting plays an important role in managing substitute staff. The solution for the practicum site would be customized to be effective.

Bellm and Whitebook (1986; 1987) suggest solving problems associated with substitute staff start with clear policies and procedures. In this California day care setting, retention was the most significant problem. Although this was not the problem at the subject setting, the resulting desire to manage substitute staff better was relevant. Many similarities exist between this day care environment solution and that proposed by Purvis and Garvey (1993) in a school setting.

The theme in Bellm and Whitebook's papers is information in the form of well defined responsibilities, an orientation program, supervision by staff and evaluation methods. The role of information dissemination is described by the authors. "The more orientation you can provide, the better the substitute's chance of handling things smoothly and efficiently" (1986, p. 10). Bellm and Whitebook (1987) suggest that orientation address daily schedule, goals (philosophy), practices, emergency procedures, location of equipment/ toys/ supplies, children's names and special needs, safety and equipment rules, activity suggestions and discipline procedures. Some of the outward signs of the problem at the subject day care center were a direct result of ignorance. Assuming competency was not an issue, education (provision of information) would be a key ingredient in the solution strategy.

Of particular interest to the writer was the use of a staff liaison to respond to the questions a substitute staff may have. This is a common element in the literature used for many purposes. The authors' objective was to improve the relationship between the center and substitute staff. This approach would also address this writers objective to allow substitute staff to quickly become familiar with their new environment, thereby shortening the period of time needed to reach peak effectiveness in their role. Optimal performance from substitute staff would

require them to know their position in the program delivery team.

In a setting where day care licensing requires trained staff (as is the case with the subject day care center), Love (1985) suggests options for retention as including permanent substitutes, a community list, recruitment and training (p. 3). A synopsis is provided: "Some programs have dealt with this issue by adding permanent substitutes to their staff. Others are working on improving recruitment, screening, and training techniques. In the administration of substitute care givers programs it is important to keep recruitment on-going" (p. 6). The message provided is that the management of substitute staff is a continuous process. This suggested the management program needed at the subject day care center would require the continuous attention of the Director.

Summary

A literature review provided critical information for a successful solution strategy applicable to this practicum problem. It was determined that the strategy should : (a) be comprehensive to be effective; (b) provide information on all aspects of the substitute staff's experience; (c) focus on the specific environment in which it is to be implemented; (d) involve permanent staff in supervision and evaluation; and (e) include orientation, training and evaluation on an on-going basis.

Proposed Solution Strategy

The proposed strategy was prepared in terms of deliverables and programs.

Orientation Package

This basic information package was intended to introduce the general environment in which a new substitute would be working. It was to have made them comfortable and secure in their new surroundings and set a positive atmosphere. Becoming familiar with the workplace would allow substitutes to focus their attention on the program.

It was to include: (a) a welcome note; (b) philosophy statement (with description); (c) the daily schedule (lunches, breaks and other daily activities); (d) a staff directory; (e) the location of center; (f) method of payment and rate; (g) evaluation method and form; (h) standard practices; (i) emergency procedures; (j) location of equipment / toys / supplies; (k) safety and equipment rules; and (l) activity suggestions.

This represents a comprehensive list derived from Purvis and Garvey (1993), and Bellm and Whitebook (1987). It is information which would remain the most constant over time and require the least amount of explanation. This format was to allow for mailing of the orientation package to first time substitutes

and all others presently on the subject day care center's substitute staff list.

Documentation of these was to be effectively undertaken with input from the Director and permanent staff. They are stakeholders in success and would be willing to participate. Their further role in the management program required them to be familiar with the base information provided to substitute staff.

Evaluation of performance was to be included at the earliest possible stage in the management strategy in order for its impact to have an effect within the 10 week implementation period.

General Information Package.

Specific information to allow substitute staff to perform well was to be provided and presented by the Director and/or permanent staff. It was to include: (a) role of the Director; (b) role of permanent staff; (c) responsibilities of substitute staff; (d) class list and any special needs; (e) program for the current day/week/month; and (f) child discipline procedure.

This list was to provide the functional aspects of performing the job. In conjunction with the orientation package, a comprehensive approach to providing information was to be achieved; a common element in the literature. This list also includes subjects that would allow a substitute to understand the team dynamics involved in delivering the program as suggested by Purvis and Garvey (1993), and

Bellm and Whitebook (1987).

A brief meeting with the Director to discuss the contents of this package was to be arranged for both first time and returning substitute staff. This was considered to be necessary because of the changing nature of the information in the package.

Preparation of this package required input from the Director. The new role of permanent staff in the management of substitute staff was to be clear to the Director to ensure future success after the 10 week implementation period. Although the management of substitute staff is ultimately the responsibility of the Director, there was to be some work load relief by the planned involvement of permanent staff.

Security Information Package

Although the topic of security could have be handled within the General Information Package, the importance of it was to be underscored by presenting it separately. The Security Information Package was to provide clear information on the importance of security at the center and include: (a) a security pass; (b) a parking permit; (c) instructions on use of passes; and (d) reasons for security. Delivery of the information was to be the same as with the General Information Package.

This package completed the comprehensive nature of information to be provided to substitutes (as suggested by Purvis and Garvey (1993), and Bellm and Whitebook (1987)) and was to provide a focus on the problem at the specific environment of the subject work place day care center.

Defined staff responsibilities

The dissemination of information to substitute staff, as represented by the above three packages, was to provide a foundation on which to build improved performance. With the stage set for substitutes to actively participate, the remaining components of acceptance and supervision needed addressing.

It would have been inconsistent to use a team approach for program delivery and then provide substitute staff management from the Director alone. A commitment to making substitutes part of the program delivery team is critical to success whether viewed from the Director's perspective (Bellm and Whitebook, 1987) or the substitute's perspective (Neugebauer, 1991). It is known that the competency level of staff at the practicum site is high. Why not use this resource to the fullest extent possible to achieve success?

To deal with the issues of acceptance and supervision in a team oriented environment, the following staff roles were proposed. The Director was to: deliver the orientation package; provide and discuss the information package; provide and

discuss the security package, and, participate in evaluation. An assigned liaison from permanent staff who was working in a different classroom was to: meet and greet the substitute; provide a facility tour; include the substitute on breaks and answer questions. Permanent staff in the classroom in which a substitute was to be employed were to provide direct supervision, allow the substitute to undertake meaningful tasks, answer questions, provide constructive feedback and participate in performance evaluation.

Evaluation process.

Evaluation was to be the final step in the management strategy. It would allow returning substitute staff to improve their performance each time they are employed. The process was to be managed by the Director and include the following steps:

1. Discussion with the supervising staff member on tasks undertaken by the substitute which exhibited good performance and those in which problems arose.

2. Discussion of these with the substitute and their perspective on the experience.

3. A record of the experience for future reference (such as measuring future performance improvements and consideration for permanent employment when vacancies arise).

This process was to have completed the cycle of information transfer. Through an iterative process, substitute staff would become increasingly competent with delivering the program at the subject day care center. In this way, the strategy was to become an ongoing management tool for the Director, a characteristic supported by Love (1985).

Plan for Implementation

General strategy.

It was recognized that the solution strategy implementation would rely significantly on the Director and staff in the 10 week schedule. This was necessary because the author's role was one of a consultant, not an employee, in the subject day care center. Confidence in their ability to successfully undertake this aspect of the project was high considering the quality of staff involved and motivation to resolve the practicum problem. The implementation plan is provided in Appendix C. It summarizes tasks, the role of the author, resources required and anticipated obstacles.

Obstacles noted were to be addressed through detailed scheduling with the Director and staff, as well as weekly monitoring and troubleshooting by the writer.

Measuring and documenting outcomes.

Two phases in measuring outcomes were to be considered: before implementing the strategy and after. A measurable difference would indicate effectiveness of the solution strategy. For each objective, a source for these measurements was selected to produce accurate and meaningful information.

For the first objective, improving substitute staff knowledge of the center's philosophy, the substitute staff themselves were to be the source of measurement. The success to be measured was an improvement in knowledge as a result of information transferred. Direct testing was considered to be the most effective measure. A simple test before providing the Orientation Information Package to the existing substitute staff list and new considerations was to measure their initial knowledge of the center's philosophy. It was recognized that some of these may be familiar with the philosophy from past experience. In any event, a baseline for improvement was to be set.

The effectiveness of the educational experience provided by the Orientation Package was to be measured by a rewriting of the initial test after receipt and review of the Information Package.

Security lapse elimination was to be determined from records maintained by the Director. Past information was already available. The Director's day book

was to be the source of records for the 10 week implementation period.

Permanent staff had already been utilized to assess the negative program impacts resulting from the use of substitute staff. This represented a baseline from which to measure improvements in the form of a reduced difference between actual performance and optimal performance. Baseline data represented the opinion of permanent staff over many years of experience with substitute staff. With a 10 week implementation period, it was important to consider the reduced number of experiences with substitute staff in data analysis. To account for this, permanent staff surveyed at the end of the implementation period were asked factual questions about the number of substitutes they had an opportunity to supervise in addition to the original qualitative questions.

Chapter V Strategy Employed - Action Taken and Results

Implementation strategy changes

Results achieved were not through an explicit following of the proposed implementation strategy. Some minor but noteworthy changes were made during implementation. These are discussed below.

The Orientation Package was not mailed to first time substitutes and all others on the substitute staff list as originally proposed. The Director decided to review this information in person with first time substitutes in conjunction with the General Information and Security Packages. This allowed the Director to respond to immediate questions.

The role of permanent staff was modified after the first attempt to implement. The meet and greet role was not performed by a specific staff member but by the staff member on opening shift. This was necessary because of staff availability.

The Director replaced permanent staff for conducting facility tours as a matter of preference. The responsibility for including a substitute on breaks and answering questions was distributed to all permanent staff, not a single assignment for one staff. It was found that creating an individual relationship for these responsibilities affected the programming by linking two programs with a break

schedule. Given the day care center's emphasis on program delivery, this was not an acceptable approach.

Obstacles encountered

One of the anticipated obstacles (see Appendix C) developed during implementation. Other obstacles anticipated did not develop. The one encountered initially threatened the ability of the project to produce results within the 10 week schedule. Successful implementation of this project required an actual need for substitute staff during implementation, a risk considering the small size of the day care center and short implementation schedule. During the first two weeks of implementation, there was not a need for substitute staff. No sick leaves were taken by permanent staff, nor were any vacations scheduled in the near future. This latter situation was a result of activities at the work place. A significant down sizing program in the day care center's supporting hospital had eliminated any short term plans for family vacations; a reaction to potential job loss. This in turn suspended the day care center's permanent staff vacation schedule since this, for the most part, is based on day care child attendance. The 10 week implementation period was to have occurred in a normally high period of substitute staff usage. Fortunately, the hospital downsizing program passed quickly and their staff returned to the usual pattern for vacation planning for the remainder of the

implementation period

An unanticipated obstacle limited the number of times to use and test the program. The usual seven or eight teachers on the Director's substitute list had suddenly, at the start of implementation of the project, reduced to only two. This was investigated and found to be a result of increased employment opportunities in the local school education system involving early years programs and also substitute staff leaving the field of child care seeking more stable employment opportunities. The implementation stage of the project was completed with three substitute teachers.

Measured results

Each objective included a unique measurement component geared to the implementation plan. This was varied to include an additional survey of staff to clarify results for the third objective (reduction in negative program delivery impacts). The first, planned survey was designed to allow for a direct analytical comparison of substitute staff performance before and after implementation. This approach was to clearly show whether the 50% improvement objective was achieved. However, conflicting results within the survey as well as result disagreement with anecdotal information showed the survey to not be totally representative of results. Both surveys have been used to assess outcomes. The

project results produced related to each objective are provided below.

Substitute staff understanding of the philosophy of the center was to increase to 100% for those employed within the implementation period. Substitute staff were tested before and after being provided with knowledge of the subject day care center's philosophy. The Director has reported positive results in each case, confirming an initial understanding of the philosophical approach to child care promoted at this center.

Security lapses were to be eliminated during the implementation period. Records kept by the Director show compliance with security requirements; no negative incidents were recorded after substitute staff were provided with comprehensive information.

Negative program delivery impacts were to be reduced by 50% after the 10 week implementation period. Two post-implementation surveys were made of permanent staff and the Director on substitute staff performance after they had received information and feedback. The first survey (see Appendix D) was a duplicate of the original survey in which baseline information was obtained. A score betterment toward optimum responses would indicate a reduction in negative program delivery (ie. an improvement). This comparative information is provided in Appendix E.

The second survey was designed to provide direct information on substitute staff performance improvement during the 10 week implementation period as compared to the original staff opinion. The questions (see Appendix F) parallelled those included in the original survey. This second post-implementation survey could not measure the level of improvement as outlined in the objective, but could confirm that improvements were made. Results from this survey are summarized in Appendix G.

Outcomes

The direct approach adopted to educate substitute staff on the philosophy to be employed at the subject day care center initially appears to be effective. In each case, substitutes could verbalize the philosophy statement. Based on the Director's records of this, a complete success is evident. However, the first question in both post-implementation surveys provides the perspective of staff on the topic. Conflicting information was obtained from the two staff surveys: a reduction in understanding the philosophy of the center in the first survey vs. an increase of a fair amount in the second. The surveys are different than the Director's records in that they provide an indication of practical application of the philosophy. It is apparent that, although substitute staff exhibited a knowledge of the center's philosophy, they may not be able to significantly employ it in daily

activities witnessed by staff.

There are a number of factors which could have attributed to this possible failure: (a) a short implementation period; (b) too few experiences; and, (c) philosophy application was not a topic discussed in feedback sessions after each experience. This latter factor is thought to be significant since a substitute needs to discuss and experience the application of a concept in order to be proficient, not just be able to recite it.

The effectiveness of providing substitute staff with comprehensive information on security measures and an understanding of the reasons for their presence has produced the intended results. With this objective, success is attributed to ensuring that substitutes understood the rational for what was being asked of them. This is in contrast to the first objective where substitute staff understanding of the information provided is not clear. It is also of interest to note that the security information was, by its nature, easy to understand. The information consisted of procedures which only needed to be followed, not interpreted before applying to daily activities.

The first post-implementation survey and subsequent comparison to the baseline survey (see Appendix E, Table E-1) provides one basis for determining substitute staff performance improvement. In the baseline survey, staff were found

to be more critical in their response than the Director. This was attributed to the different level of contact that staff had with substitutes as compared to the Director. In the first post-implementation survey, however, this condition reversed with the Director being more critical than staff. A discussion with the Director confirmed a changing view on the severity of the original problem. This had been brought about by the Director becoming more educated on the problem and involved in the strategy for managing substitute staff.

A number of questions produced marginal results, exhibiting both positive and negative changes in the performance of substitute teachers. To simplify the analysis and produce meaningful results, any change less than 5% has been assumed to indicate no change in program delivery performance by substitute staff or to be inconclusive. This includes: children needing reminders; extent of program adjustment; work load increases when substitute are in the room; work load increases when substitutes are in the center; quantity of work provided; and, ability to perform on subsequent visits.

A factor which may have contributed to these results is too few experiences upon which to achieve positive results. The feedback process needs time to take effect because substitute staff performance is a result of the cumulative effects of small improvements. Also, the effectiveness of constructive

feedback may not have been optimal since this task was not performed by the writer. There is also concern that any performance improvements may have been masked by higher expectations and more critical analysis by permanent staff, as was the case with the Director. This was the reason for conducting the second survey.

In the baseline survey, knowledge of routines and quality of work by substitute staff represented the greatest disparity between staff opinion and optimum performance. The first post-implementation survey shows these to be among the most improved; knowledge of routines by 10% and quality of work by 22%. The only other noteworthy improvements are 37% for substitute staff shouldering a full workload and 15% for quantity of work provided by substitutes. These four results show an improvement in performance, but not to the extent set in the objective.

The substitute teachers have shown themselves to be able to more closely resemble permanent staff in performance. Lower than planned improvement can be contributed to the short implementation period (which was further shortened to only eight weeks due to the hospital restructuring program) and the low number of experiences. These two factors affect the ability of the implementation program to develop cumulative improvements. They are generated by progressive

improvements produced by constructive feedback and experience. Based on this premise, the reduction of available substitute teachers from eight to three during the implementation period was a benefit since each was exposed to the management program more in the 10 week implementation period.

The second post-implementation survey confirmed the positive results found in the first survey: knowledge of routines improved by some to a fair amount; quality of work improved by a fair amount; substitute staff shouldering a full work load improved by some to a fair amount; and, quantity of work provided by substitutes improved by some to a fair amount. Improvement is noted in all areas based on this survey in contrast to the inconclusiveness exhibited by the first post-implementation survey.

A review of individual extreme scores shows that the performance improvement of substitute teachers has varied from very much to not at all. Extreme improvement scores were found to be twice as prevalent (six times) as no improvement at all scores (three times). It is obvious that the program does not work as well for some substitutes as it does for others.

Results compared to the literature.

Concern raised by the writer about results being limited by the size of the project parallels to that found by Shaw (1994). The approach to managing

substitute staff in this case involved a pool of substitutes shared by a number of day care centers. Success is noted as being limited; more centers should be involved in the project. Although a successful project is always desired, the risk of failure is present and feared. Projects of limited size are a natural approach to meeting a learning objective while limiting the risk of a significant failure. This would appear to be the case in both this project and Shaw's undertaking.

The "quality of substitutes will be improved through training, evaluation and monitoring" (Gallo, 1991, p. 38). Such statements in the literature initially provided the writer with enough confidence to include the methods of others in this project. Results produced agreement with their experiences.

Duffy (1991) presents results of her approach to a similar problem in terms of "what we did right" (p. 25) and "the flaws" (p. 25). This technique readily lends itself to an honest assessment of her approach and shows how it can be improved for better results. The writer has adjusted the approach adopted in this project during the course of implementation to maximize success. Despite this, there are still flaws which can be reported on for the benefit of others. These are discussed in the following chapter.

Bellm and Whitebook (1986) conclude that "few subs ever hear that their energy and talents have made a tremendous difference to other child care workers,

parents and children. This causes many subs to downplay the value of their work" (p. 30). The objective of this practicum project was to improve the performance of substitute staff such that it more closely resemble that of permanent staff. It is hoped that the positive results found in this practicum also indicate an improved level of self esteem for the substitute staff involved. This same theme is found in the conclusions of Gallo (1991) where it is recommended to "provide the necessary training, evaluation, monitoring, benefits and professional status that is long overdue substitutes" (p. 39). Positive results of this practicum are assumed to also reflect that the substitutes involved feel like an equal while among the permanent staff.

Chapter VI Conclusion - Implications and Recommendations

Conclusions related to the objectives

The first objective, to achieve a full knowledge of the center's philosophy, produced conflicting results. It has been concluded that the approach did not provide substitute staff with sufficient feedback in order to learn how to apply the philosophy in daily activities. This can be corrected in the further implementation of the management strategy.

The elimination of security lapses was a complete success. It has been found that the educational experience for substitute staff was complete with the information package, instructions and communication of the rational for security measures.

Negative program delivery impacts due to the presence of substitute staff have been reduced at the subject day care center, but not to the extent desired over the implementation period. Difficulty was encountered in measuring improvements. This initially cast a veil of uncertainty on whether success was achieved. The second measurement approach more closely resembled anecdotal information. Further improvements are forecasted given that the main obstacle appeared to be the short implementation period and subsequent low number of experiences for each substitute teacher.

Other conclusions

In addition to what has been derived from an attempt to achieve the stated objectives, other lessons were learned during the implementation of this practicum project. It has been shown that substitute staff learn by experience when the application of a philosophy is involved, or in the absence of specific mechanical instructions. The process is more effective when the experience is the subject of feedback discussion on the successes and failures of the experience. This allows the substitute to accumulate a history of positive results which can be repeated or built upon for further performance improvement.

Time becomes both an ally and an enemy in this case. Experience accrues with time resulting in an increasingly more successful substitute whose performance approaches that of a permanent teacher. On the negative side, less than this desired performance level can be expected while the substitute is learning through experience.

The information packages serve to accelerate the learning process by dealing with a broad range of basic issues and topics; no time is lost learning mechanical procedures. Substitutes can then focus their effort on applying their own knowledge, education and experience to improve their performance at this particular day care center.

The effectiveness of implementing the project with the writer in the role of a consultant has been questioned. This removed the writer from the site where the finer details of implementation could not be witnessed or improved upon.

Recommendations related to the objectives

The management plan for substitute staff in the subject work place day care center should be continued with substitute staff feedback including discussions on the application of the center's philosophy. Sufficient improvement over the 10 week implementation period suggests that, with more time and experience, all objectives for substitute staff can be achieved with the rigorous management approach developed.

Implications for others

Methods to improve substitute teacher performance based on education, training and evaluation have been shown to produce positive results. Attention was paid to the specific needs of the subject day care center. Adjustment for the requirements at other sites can make the approach portable and worth the consideration of others.

An inability to completely achieve all objectives in this project is not considered a failure. Just as the substitute staff learned from their experiences in teaching children, so should administrators learn from the outcomes of their

management programs. This can only be possible with defined objectives and measurement tools (ie. rigorous assessment).

Further work planned

The Director will be continuing to implement the modified management plan. It has shown itself to produce satisfactory results and capable of delivering further improvement to substitute staff performance.

Disseminating the practicum results

The author has a number of methods planned to disseminate the results. At the local level, a summary version of this report will be placed in a resource library frequented by day care teachers and administrators. It will also be made available to instructors at the local college for consideration in a day care center administrator diploma program.

Further geographic distribution of the knowledge gained in this project will be possible by having the entire report available through a computer database accessible to child care program administrators.

From a personal perspective, the knowledge gained through efforts on this project are well entrenched in the writer and available for any applicable situation. The knowledge gained and skills developed include strategies for managing substitute staff, getting good information from others and performance evaluation

methods. These are important skills applicable to other components of administering child care programs.

Recommendations for further study

A study of the management strategy approach used in this project implemented over a longer period of time would show the extent to which substitute staff performance could be improved. Other variations on the particulars of this project may produce more focused results for others to consider. For example, what different implementation approaches and outcomes would result in other types of day care settings, involving teachers with different qualifications or at larger institutions? Changing the variables of this project could produce a matrix of unique considerations, approaches and solutions which others can more readily relate to.

The above recommendations for further study involve managing the problem. How much effort should an administrator put towards minimizing the frequency of the problem as opposed to dealing with the negative impacts of its presence? This may include such measures as reducing the frequency of problem occurrence (short term absenteeism, such as illness) through incentives for permanent staff. What strategies work successfully in managing absenteeism of permanent staff in the early childhood education industry? These are questions also worthy of consideration in other practicum projects.

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Appendix A

Appendix A

Baseline Survey of Full Time Employees

Please answer each question to the best of your ability. Circle your answer. Do not draw lines between numbers. Thank you.

	very much	a fair amount	some	not at all
1. To what extent do you feel substitute staff understanding of the philosophy of the center has improved?	1	2	3	4
2. To what extent have substitute staff shouldered the work load when present?	1	2	3	4
3. To what extent were child routine reminders reduced when substitute staff were present?	1	2	3	4
4. To what extent did you find substitute staff to be knowledgeable about the routines in your room?	1	2	3	4
5. To what extent did you adjust your program when substitute staff were present?	1	2	3	4
6. To what extent do you feel your work load increased when substitute staff were in your *room*?	1	2	3	4
7. To what extent do you feel your work load increased when substitute staff were in the *center*?	1	2	3	4
8. To what extent were you satisfied with the *quality* of work provided by substitute staff?	1	2	3	4
9. To what extent were you satisfied with the *quantity*	1	2	3	4

of work provided by substitute staff?

10. To what extent did you find substitute staff able to perform better on subsequent visits?	1	2	3	4
11. To what extent would you like to have input into the selection of substitute staff?	1	2	3	4

Appendix B

Appendix B

Table B-1 Results of Baseline Survey

Rating (1 - 4)	Number of staff responses				Average of staff / director / optimum answer
	1 very much	2 a fair amount	3 some	4 not at all	
1. To what extent do you feel substitute staff understand the philosophy of the centre?	1	7	4	0	2.25 / 2 / 1
2. To what extent do you expect the substitute staff to shoulder a full workload when present?	0	5	7	0	2.58 / 2 / 1
3. To what extent do the children need to be reminded about routines when substitute staff are present?	2	3	6	1	2.50 / 3 / 4
4. To what extent do you find substitute staff to be knowledgeable about the routines in your room?	0	3	8	1	2.83 / 2 / 1
5. To what extent do you adjust your program when substitute staff are present?	0	3	8	1	2.83 / 3 / 4

6. To what extent do you feel your workload increases when substitute staff are in your *room*?	1	4	7	0	2.50 / 3 / 4
7. To what extent do you feel your workload increases when substitute staff are in the *center*?	0	3	6	3	3.00 / 3 / 4
8. To what extent are you satisfied with the *quality* of work provided by substitute staff?	1	4	5	2	2.67 / 2 / 1
9. To what extent are you satisfied with the *quantity* of work provided by substitute staff?	1	4	7	0	2.50 / 2 / 1
10. To what extent do you find substitute staff able to perform on subsequent visits?	3	3	6	0	2.25 / 2 / 1
11. To what extent would you like to have input into the selection of substitute staff?	3	3	5	1	2.33 / 2 / 1

Appendix C

Appendix C

Table C-1 Plan for Implementation of Activities

Week	Task	Role	Resources	Obstacles
1	develop measurement tools	design and prepare	director	availability and approval of director
2	implement tools to measure conditions before strategy initiated	contact existing substitute staff and measure level of present knowledge	measurement tools, substitute staff list	refusal of substitute staff to participate, availability of substitute staff
	distribute orientation, general and security information packages to substitute staff on current list	compile and distribute	substitute staff list	completeness of list

	train permanent staff on their role	prepare presentation, prepare role package, present to staff	director, current staff information documents, meeting room and equipment	coordinating with all staff
	initiate use of information packages for new substitute staff employed	include new substitute staff in project	director to implement	incomplete use of measurement tools, incomplete distribution of information packages
3 - 9	management strategy put into effect for all substitute staff situations	troubleshoot the strategy, check for complete and consistent use of the strategy by staff, document feedback	director and staff	incomplete or ineffective use of the strategy, lack of need for substitute staff

10	implement tools to measure success of the solution strategy	obtain final measurements from all sources	director and staff	availability of staff, incomplete records by director

Appendix D

Appendix D

First Post-Implementation Survey of Full Time Employees

Please answer each question to the best of your ability. Circle your answer. Do not draw lines between numbers. Thank you

	very much	a fair amount	some	not at all
1. To what extent do you feel substitute staff understand the philosophy of the center?	1	2	3	4
2. To what extent do you expect substitute staff to shouldered a full work load when present?	1	2	3	4
3. To what extent do the children need to be remindered of routines when substitute staff are present?	1	2	3	4
4. To what extent do you find substitute staff to be knowledgeable about the routines in your room?	1	2	3	4
5. To what extent do you adjust your program when substitute staff were present?	1	2	3	4
6. To what extent do you feel your work load increases when substitute staff are in your *room?*	1	2	3	4
7. To what extent do you feel your work load increases when substitute staff are in	1	2	3	4

the *center*?

8. To what extent are you satisfied with the *quality* of work provided by substitute staff?	1	2	3	4
9. To what extent are you satisfied with the *quantity* of work provided by substitute staff?	1	2	3	4
10. To what extent do you find substitute staff able to perform on subsequent visits?	1	2	3	4
11. How many substitute staff have you worked with in the last ten weeks?	_____			

Appendix E

Appendix E

Table E-1 Results of First Post-Implementation Survey

Rating (1 - 4)	Number of staff responses				Average of staff / director / optimum answer
	1 very much	2 a fair amount	3 some	4 not at all	
1. To what extent do you feel substitute staff understand the philosophy of the center?	3	3	2.18	2.36	2.36 / 3 / 1
2. To what extent do you expect the substitute staff to shoulder a full workload when present?	2	3	2.36	2.00	2.00 / 2 / 1
3. To what extent do the children need to be reminded about routines when substitute staff are present?	2	3	2.45	2.36	2.36 / 2 / 4
4. To what extent do you find substitute staff to be knowledgeable about the routines in your room?	3	3	2.55	2.64	2.64 / 3 / 1
5. To what extent do you adjust your program when substitute staff are present?	3	3	2.82	2.73	2.73 / 3 / 4

6 To what extent do you feel your workload increases when substitute staff are in your *room*?	2	2	2.45	2.36	2.36 / 2 / 4
7 To what extent do you feel your workload increases when substitute staff are in the *center*?	2	3	2.90	2.91	2.91 / 2 / 4
8 To what extent are you satisfied with the *quality* of work provided by substitute staff?	3	3	2.18	2.30	2.30 / 3 / 1
9 To what extent are you satisfied with the *quantity* of work provided by substitute staff?	3	2	2.45	2.27	2.27 / 3 / 1
10 To what extent do you find substitute staff able to perform on subsequent visits?	3	3	2.36	2.18	2.18 / 3 / 1
11 How many substitute staff have you worked with in the last ten weeks?					2.36 / 3

Notes: staff experiences ranged from 1 to 6; 3 different substitute staff were employed.

Appendix F

Appendix F

Table F-1 Comparison of Baseline and First Post-Implementation Surveys

	Director and Average Staff Responses			
	Director Before / After	Staff Before / After	Optimum Answer	Improvement to Optimum
1. To what extent do you feel substitute staff understand the philosophy of the centre?	2 / 3	2.25 / 2.36	1	-12%
2. To what extent do you expect the substitute staff to shoulder a full workload when present?	2 / 2	2.58 / 2.00	1	+37%
3. To what extent do the children need to be reminded about routines when substitute staff are present?	3 / 2	2.50 / 2.36	4	-3%
4. To what extent do you find substitute staff to be knowledgeable about the routines in your room?	2 / 3	2.83 / 2.64	1	+10 %
5. To what extent do you adjust your program when substitute staff are present?	3 / 3	2.83 / 2.73	4	-9%
6. To what extent do you feel				

your workload increases when substitute staff are in your *room?*	3 / 2	2.50 / 2.36	4	-9%
7. To what extent do you feel your work load increases when substitute staff are in the *center*?	3 / 2	3.00 / 2.91	4	-9%
8. To what extent are you satisfied with the *quality* of work provided by substitute staff?	2 / 3	2.67 / 2.30	1	+22%
9. To what extent are you satisfied with the *quantity* of work provided by substitute staff?	2 / 3	2.50 / 2.27	1	+15%
10. To what extent do you find substitute staff able to perform on subsequent visits?	2 / 3	2.25 / 2.18	1	+6%
11. How many substitute staff have you worked with in the last ten weeks?	3	2.36		

Notes: staff experiences ranged from 1 to 6; 3 different substitute staff were employed.

Appendix G

Appendix G

Second Post-Implementation Survey of Full Time Employees

Please answer each question about your recent (last ten weeks) experiences with substitute staff as compared to your experiences before. Circle your answer. Do not draw lines between numbers. Thank you.

	very much	a fair amount	some	not at all
1. To what extent do you feel substitute staff understanding of the philosophy of the center has improved?	1	2	3	4
2. To what extent have substitute staff shouldered the work load when present?	1	2	3	4
3. To what extent were children routine reminders reduced when substitute staff were present?	1	2	3	4
4. To what extent do you find supply staff to be knowledgeable about the routines in your room?	1	2	3	4
5. To what extent did you adjust your program when substitute staff were present?	1	2	3	4
6. To what extent did you feel your work load increased when substitute staff were in your *room*?	1	2	3	4
7. To what extent did you feel your work load increased when substitute staff were in	1	2	3	4

the *center*?

8. To what extent were you satisfied with the *quality* of work provided by substitute staff?	1	2	3	4
9. To what extent were you satisfied with the *quantity* of work provided by substitute staff?	1	2	3	4
10. To what extent did you find substitute staff able to perform better on subsequent visits?	1	2	3	4
11. How many substitute staff have you worked with in the last ten weeks?	_____			

Appendix H

Appendix H

Table H-1 Results of Second Post-Implementation Survey of Permanent Staff and Director

Rating (1 - 4)	Number of staff responses				Average of staff / director / optimum answer
	1 very much	2 a fair amount	3 some	4 not at all	
1. To what extent do you feel substitute staff understanding of the philosophy of the center has improved?	2	3	5	1	2.18 / 3 / 1
2. To what extent have substitute staff shouldered the work load when present?	1	5	5	0	2.36 / 3 / 1
3. To what extent were children routine reminders reduced when substitute staff were present?	1	5	4	1	2.45 / 3 / 1
4. To what extent did you find substitute staff to be knowledgeable about the routines in your room?	0	5	6	0	2.55 / 3 / 1
5. To what extent did you adjust your program when substitute staff were present?	1	0	10	0	2.82 / 3 / 4

6. To what extent did your work load increase when substitute staff were in your *room?*	0	6	5	0	2.45 / 2 / 4
7. To what extent did you feel your workload increased when substitute staff were in the *center*?	0	2	7	1	2.90 / 3 / 4
8. To what extent were you satisfied with the *quality* of work provided by substitute staff?	1	7	3	0	2.18 / 3 / 1
9. To what extent were you satisfied with the *quantity* of work provided by substitute staff?	0	6	5	0	2.45 / 2 / 1
10. To what extent did you find substitute staff able to perform better on subsequent visits?	0	7	4	0	2.25 / 2 / 1
11. How many substitute staff have you worked with in the last ten weeks?					2.36 / 3 /

Notes: staff experiences ranged from 1 to 6; 3 different substitute staff were employed.